

James and Heather Cochrane

Location: **Porto, PORTUGAL**

Mission: **Church planting**



Lockdown, Zoom meetings, study ...

Portugal has made the global news' headlines in the past month with its record high new daily cases, high numbers of deaths and overflowing hospital wards. It was no surprise that our lockdown was extended. Thankfully, the confinement has reduced the impact of the pandemic. We have just entered another two-week period of state of emergency and lockdown, which we expect to be renewed and last until at least the middle of March. The economy is suffering terribly but there is a general opinion that the priority at the minute is to try and stop the spread of the pandemic and save lives. There are a few people in Cominidade Pedras Vivas who have struggled financially during this time. We give thanks that, as a congregation, we have pulled together to support those who need help.

During lockdown we continue with online services. We finished a series on James and for three weeks we will be looking at the prodigal son. As a team we meet on Mondays via Zoom to catch up and pray for one another. Our prayer meetings continue weekly on Zoom. Our "40 days of prayer" campaign finished on 9 February. It was an encouraging time, which drew the church together in prayer. Some of our members benefitted from the discipline of reading Scripture and praying every day for 40 days.

With these online ministry commitments, we find we are kept quite busy. In addition, we are still involved in three micro groups (small discipleship groups) which meet online every week. Lucy is studying extremely hard and requires a lot of support from Heather as she prepares for exams in May. James, in his free time, has been studying a CCEF (Christian Counselling & Education Foundation)

introductory course, a course completed by Heather just before Christmas. The course has been of great personal benefit and has helped us to develop skills that better enable us to speak God's Word into people's lives when they are going through difficult periods.



Online service (watching on TV at home)



Our next sermon series "Prodigal Son"

Prayer points

- Give thanks that the high numbers of cases and deaths have been curbed by the lockdown.
- Give thanks to God for online ministry opportunities – Sunday services, prayer meetings, team planning, micro groups.
- Pray for people in Portugal who are struggling with the effects of COVID – sickness, unemployment, mental health.
- Pray for Lucy as she studies for her final exams and Heather as she offers support.
- Give thanks for the opportunity for James and Heather to study.